Report on Troops withdrawal in J&K

1672. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the committee headed by Defence Secretary set up to look into the demand of troops reduction in J&K has submitted any report and if so, the salient features thereof; and

(b) what action Government has taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) The draft Report of the Expert Panel has been submitted to the Government. The main recommendations pertain to reconciling of the details of the properties occupied by the Security Forces and the rentals paid as also to resolve old cases that have remained unsettled for many years; vacation of public utility services by the security forces, such as school buildings, hospitals the timings of the convoys of the security forces may be reworked so as to cause least inconvenience to the local population; the Dos, and Dont's issued by the Security Forces need to be strictly followed. Implementation of the recommendations is an ongoing process, keeping in view the prevailing security situation.

Missing soldiers of 1971 war in Pakistani Jail

†1673. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a lot of soldiers went missing during the Pakistan war of 1971 and evidences of their being lodged in various jails of Pakistan are surfacing even today;

(b) the total number of these soldiers;

(c) whether it is a fact that these soldiers are forced to lead a miserable life;

(d) the efforts being undertaken by Government for their release; and

(e) the assistance provided by Government for the dependants of these soldiers and the schemes formulated for their rehabilitation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (e) About 54 missing defence personnel of 1971 War are believed to be in the custody of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has, however, been consistently denying the presence of any such personnel in its custody. The Government of India have been pursuing this issue with Pakistan for a long time and is deeply concerned about it.

This issue was taken up with the Pakistan Government at various levels on a number of occasions. Most recently, during the visit of External Affairs Minister, to Islamabad in January, 2007, the matter was raised with President of Pakistan and the latter in turn agreed to a visit by a small group of relatives to Pakistan.

Accordingly, a delegation of 14 relatives of missing defence personnel visited 10 Jails in different cities of Pakistan from 1st June, 2007 to 14th June, 2007, but they could not find any missing defence personnel of 1971 War.

As per instructions, a missing person is presumed to be killed if he is not found for 7 years and thereafter his family a given liberalised pensionary awards, which include liberalised family pension, gratuity and education allowance for children. Actions accordingly have

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.